

Altai language

Altai (also **Gorno-Altai**) is a Turkic language, spoken officially in the Altai Republic, Russia. The language was called **Oyrot** (ойрот) prior to 1948.

Contents
Classification
Geographical distribution
Official status
Varieties
Orthography
Missionary's Cyrillic Alphabet
First Cyrillic Alphabet (1922-1928)
Latin Alphabet (1928-1938)
Second Cyrillic Alphabet (1938-1944)
Modern Standard Altai Alphabet
Linguistic features
Phonology
Consonants
Vowels
Morphology and syntax
Pronouns
See also
References
External links

Classification

Due to its isolated position in the Altai Mountains and contact with surrounding languages, the classification of Altai within the Turkic languages has often been disputed. Because of its geographic proximity to the Shor and Khakas languages, some classifications place it in a Northern Turkic subgroup.^[3] Due to certain similarities with Kyrgyz, it has been grouped with the Kypchak languages which is within the Turkic language family. A more recent classification by Talat Tekin places Southern Altai in its own subgroup within Turkic and groups the Northern Altai dialects with Lower Chulym and the Kondoma dialect of Shor.^[4]

Geographical distribution

Altai is spoken primarily in the Altai Republic (Southern Altai) and Altai Krai (Northern Altai).

Official status

Alongside Russian, Altai is an official language of the Altai Republic. The official language is based on the Southern dialect spoken by the group called the Altay-Kiži, however in the few years it has also spread to the Northern Altai Republic.

Varieties

Though traditionally considered one language, Southern Altai is not fully mutually intelligible with the Northern varieties. Written Altai is based on Southern Altai, and according to *Ethnologue* is rejected by Northern Altai children.^[5] In 2006, a Cyrillic alphabet was created for the Kumandy variety of Northern Altai for use in Altai Krai.^[6]

Dialects are as follows:^[7]

- Southern Altai**

Altai	
Gorno-Altai	
алтайдын тил, алтай тил	
Native to	Russia
Region	Altai Republic, Altai Krai, Kemerovo Oblast
Ethnicity	Altai, Chelkans, Telengits, Tubalar
Native speakers	55,720 (2010 census) ^[1] (may not all be fluent)
Language family	Turkic ▪ Common Turkic ▪ Siberian Turkic ▪ Altai
Writing system	Cyrillic
Official status	
Official language in	 Russia ▪ Altai Republic
Language codes	
ISO 639-2	alt (http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=17)
ISO 639-3	Either: atv – Northern Altai alt – Southern Altai
Glottolog	<i>None</i> alta1276 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/altai1276) code retired ^[2]

- Altai proper
 - Mayma
- Telengit
 - Tölös
 - Chuy
- Teleut
- Northern Altai
 - Tuba
 - Kumandy
 - Turachak
 - Solton
 - Starobardinian
 - Chalkan (also called Kuu, Lebedin)

Closely related to the northern varieties are Kondom Shor and Lower Chulym, which have -j- for proto-Turkic inter-vocalic *d, unlike Mras Shor and Middle Chulym, which have -z- and are closer to Khakas.

Orthography

The language was written with the Latin script from 1928–1938, but has used Cyrillic (with the addition of 9 extra letters: Jj [ḑz~ɟ], Hh [ɣ], Öö [ø~œ], Ўў [y~ʏ], Ff [ʁ], Ққ [q], һһ [h], Ҡҡ [ḑ͡ʁ], Ii [ɟ͡ɣ]) since 1938.

The letter Ў is sometimes used instead of Ў̈.

Missionary's Cyrillic Alphabet

The first writing system for Altai was invented by missionaries from the Altai Spiritual Mission in the 1840s; it was based on the Cyrillic alphabet and invented for the Teleut dialect and was used mostly for Church publications.^[8] The first books were printed in Altai not long thereafter and in 1868, the first Altaic Alphabet was published. There was no stable form of this alphabet, and it changed from edition-to-edition.

With this in mind, this is an inventory of some of these letters:

Aa	Бб	Гг	Дд	Јј	Ее	Жж	Зз	Іі	Йй
Кк, Ƙƙ	Лл	Мм	Нн	Һһ, Ӧӧ	Оо	ӖӖ	Пп		
Рр	Сс	Тт	Уу	Ӱӱ	Чч	Шш	Ыы		

First Cyrillic Alphabet (1922-1928)

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, publishing books into Altai was resumed in 1921^[9], using a script similar to the Missionary's Alphabet. About this time, many post-revolution letters were adopted to better compose Russian words adopted into the language. As such, it took on this form (non-Russian letters emboldened):

Aa	Бб	Вв	Гг	Дд	Јј	Ее	Жж	Зз	Ии
Йй	Кк	Лл	Мм	Нн	Ӧӧ	Оо	ӖӖ	Пп	Рр
Сс	Тт	Уу	Ӱӱ	Фф	Хх	Цц	Чч	Шш	Щщ
Ъъ	Ыы	Ьь	Ээ	Юю	Яя				

Interestingly, in the same space, many considered adapting the old Mongolian Script for use in writing Altai.^[10]

Latin Alphabet (1928-1938)

The Latin Alphabet was eventually adopted and was used from 1922-1928. The final version of this alphabet was published in 1931, taking this form^[11]:

Aa	Bb	Cc	Çç	Dd	Ee	Ff	Gg	Ii	Jj
Kk	Ll	Mm	Nn	Ŋŋ	Oo	Өө	Pp	Rr	Ss
Şş	Tt	Uu	Vv	Xx	Yy	Zz	Ƶƶ	Ьь	

Second Cyrillic Alphabet (1938-1944)

In 1938, the *Central Research Institute of Language and Writing of the Peoples of the USSR* began a project of designing a new Altaic Alphabet, based on the Cyrillic script. Their new alphabet consisted of all 33 Russian letters, as well as the additions of the digraph ⟨Дь дь⟩ and the letter ⟨Нн⟩, for the phonemes /d͡ʒ/ and /ŋ/, respectively. However, this was later rejected, because it could not contain for all of Altai's phonological inventory. So too, was the use of ⟨Ёё⟩ and ⟨Юю⟩ for Altai's vowels /ø~œ/ and /y/ removed.

To amend, the Institute's first revised alphabet contained the base Russian with the edition of four extras, two digraphs and two letters: ⟨Дь дь⟩, ⟨Нь нь⟩, ⟨Ӗӓ⟩, and ⟨ӚӚ⟩ for the sounds: /d͡ʒ/, /ŋ/, /ø~œ/, and /y/ respectively. In its second revision, however, ⟨Нь нь⟩ was replaced with ⟨Нн⟩. Thus was born:

Аа	Бб	Вв	Гг	Дд	Дь дь	Ее	Ёё	Жж	Зз
Ии	Йй	Кк	Лл	Мм	Нн	Нь нь, Нн	Оо	Ӗӓ	
Пп	Рр	Сс	Тт	Уу	ӚӚ	Фф	Хх	Цц	Чч
Шш	Щщ	Ъъ	Ыы	Ьь	Ээ	Юю	Яя		

Though, the speakers of Altai accepted the first variant, but preferring ⟨Н' н'⟩ over ⟨Нн⟩.

Аа	Бб	Вв	Гг	Дд	Дь дь	Ее	Ёё	Жж	Зз
Ии	Йй	Кк	Лл	Мм	Нн	Н' н'	Оо	Ӗӓ	Пп
Рр	Сс	Тт	Уу	Фф	Хх	Цц	Чч	Шш	Щщ
Ъъ	Ыы	Ьь	Ээ	Юю	Яя				

Modern Standard Altai Alphabet

Their second Cyrillic alphabet had many shortcomings, thus begging for a reform, which was carried out in 1944. The usage of ⟨Ёё⟩ and ⟨Юю⟩ /ø~œ/ and /y/ was dropped entirely, being replaced by the adoption of the Institute's second revision's usages of ⟨Ӗӓ⟩, and ⟨ӚӚ⟩, for native words. ⟨Дь дь⟩ was dropped in favour of ⟨Јј⟩; for ⟨Н' н'⟩, they finally accepted ⟨Нн⟩.

The letters ⟨Ёё⟩, ⟨Юю⟩, and ⟨Яя⟩ are still used, though they are reserved for only non-native, Russian loan-words. So, in modern Standard Altai, the equivalent sounds are written: ⟨ӓӓ⟩, ⟨ӗӗ⟩ and ⟨ӕӕ⟩, for native words. So, words that were written: *кая* and *коён*, are now written as: *каӓа* and *коӗӓн*.

Аа	Бб	Вв	Гг	Дд	Јј	Ее	Ёё
а	бэ	вэ	гэ	дэ	јэ	е	ё
Жж	Зз	Ии	Йй	Кк	Лл	Мм	Нн
жэ	зэ	и	эй	ка	эл	эм	эн
Нн	Оо	Ӗӓ	Пп	Рр	Сс	Тт	Уу
нн	о	ӓ	пэ	эр	эс	тэ	у
ӚӚ	Фф	Хх	Цц	Чч	Шш	Щщ	
Ӛ	эф	ха	цэ	че	ша	ща	
Ъъ	Ыы	Ьь	Ээ	Юю	Яя		
кату темдек	ы	јымжак темдек	э	ю	я		

Linguistic features

The following features refer to the outcome of commonly used Turkic isoglosses in Northern Altai.^{[12][13][14]}

- **/ag/* — Proto-Turkic **/ag/* is found in three variations throughout Northern Altai: /u/, /aw/, /aɤ/.
- **/eb/* — Proto-Turkic **/eb/* is found as either /yj/ or /yg/, depending on the variety.
- **/VdV/* — With a few lexical exceptions (likely borrowings), proto-Turkic intervocalic **/d/* results in /j/.

Phonology

The sounds of the Altai language vary among different dialects.

Consonants

Consonant phonemes of Altai					
	Labial	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Nasal	m	n			ŋ
Plosive	p b	t d		c ɟ	k g
Affricate			tʃ		
Fricative		s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ
Approximant		l		j	
Rhotic		r~ɾ			

The voiced palatal plosive /ɟ/ varies greatly from dialect to dialect, especially in the initial position, and may be recognized as a voiced affricate /d͡z/. Forms of the word *joκ* "no" include [coq] (Kuu dialect) and [joq] (Kumandy). Even within dialects, this phoneme varies greatly.^{[15][16][17]}

Vowels

There are eight vowels in Altai. These vowels may be long or short.

Vowel phonemes of Altai					
		Front		Back	
		short	long	short	long
Close	unrounded	i	iː	ɯ	ɯː
	rounded	y	yː	u	uː
Open	unrounded	e	eː	a	aː
	rounded	ø	øː	o	oː

Morphology and syntax

Pronouns

Altai has six personal pronouns:

Personal pronouns in Standard/Southern dialect			
Singular		Plural	
Altai (transliteration)	English	Altai (transliteration)	English
мен (men)	I	бис (bis)	we
сен (sen)	you (<i>singular</i>)	слер (sler)	you (<i>plural, formal</i>)
ол (ol)	he/she/it	олор (olor)	they

The declension of the pronouns is outlined in the following chart.

Declension of pronouns in Standard/Southern dialect

Nom	мен	сен	ол	бис	слер	олор
Acc	мени	сени	оны	бисти	слерди	олорды
Gen	менин	сенин	онын	бистин	слердин	олордын
Dat	мере	сере	ого	биске	слерге	олорго
Loc	менде	сенде	анда	бисте	слерде	олордо
Abl	менден	сенден	ондон	бистен	слерден	олордон
Inst	мениле	сениле	оныла	бисле	слерле	олорло

Pronouns in the various dialects vary considerably. For example, the pronouns in the Qumandin dialect follow.^[18]

Personal pronouns in Qumandin

Singular		Plural	
Altai (transliteration)	English	Altai (transliteration)	English
мен (men)	I	пис (pis)	we
сен (sen)	you (<i>singular</i>)	снер (sner)	you (<i>plural, formal</i>)
ол (ol)	he/she/it	анар (anar)	they

See also

- Telengits, Teleuts (names of related ethnic groups)
- Turkic peoples

References

- "Population of the Russian Federation by Languages (in Russian)" (http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-05.pdf) (PDF). *gks.ru*. Russian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 1 November 2017.
- Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "code retired" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/alta1276>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
- Gordon, Raymond G. Jr., ed. (2005). "Ethnologue report for Northern Turkic" (http://www.ethnologue.com/show_family.asp?subid=92721). SIL International. Retrieved 2007-09-14.
- Tekin, Tâlat (January 1989). "A New Classification of the Chuvash-Turkic Languages". *Erdem*. **5** (13): 129–139. ISSN 1010-867X (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/1010-867X>).
- Raymond G. Gordon Jr., ed. 2005. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 15th edition. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- В Алтайском крае издана азбука кумандинского языка. 2006 (<http://www.indigenous.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=215>)
- Baskakov, N. A. (1958). "La Classification des Dialectes de la Langue Turque d'Altai". *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (in French). **8**: 9–15. ISSN 0001-6446 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0001-6446>).
- V. N. Tadin. Orthography of the Altai language (in Russian) || Orthography of the Turkic literary languages of the USSR. -- Moscow: Nauka, 1973
- Basic Dates of Altai Book History (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160319130358/http://www.nbna.ru/index.php/osnovnie-dati-istorii-knigi-altaya>).
- M.S. Katashev. National-language construction in the Mountainous Altai in the 1920s-1930s: Experience, History, Problems. Altai language and culture: modern trends in development. - Gorno-Altai, 2016. -- pg. 109-116, 260, and 350 -- ISBN 978-5-903693-32-0.
- А. Тыбыкова. Об усовершенствовании и унификация алфавита алтайского языка (рус.) // Вопросы совершенствования алфавитов тюркских языков СССР. — М.: Наука, 1972. — С. 41-48.
- Баскаков, Николай Александрович (1966). *Диалект Черневых Татар (Туба-Киж): грамматический очерк и словарь*. Москва: Наука.
- Баскаков, Николай Александрович (1972). *Диалект Кумандинцев (Куманды-Киж): грамматический очерк, тексты, переводы и словарь*. Москва: Наука.
- Баскаков, Николай Александрович (1985). *Диалект Лебединских Татар-Чалканцев (Куу-Киж)*. Москва: Наука.
- Baskakov, N.A. (1985). Диалект Лебединских Татар-Чалканцев (Куу-Киж). Северные Диалекты Алтайского (Ойротского) Языка (in Russian). Moscow: Издательство «Наука». ISBN 0-8285-3393-8. OCLC 21048607 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/21048607>).
- Baskakov, N.A. (1972). Диалект Кумандинцев (Куманды-Киж). Северные Диалекты Алтайского (Ойротского) Языка (in Russian). Moscow: Издательство «Наука». ISBN 0-8285-3393-8. OCLC 38772803 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/38772803>).
- Баскаков, Николай Александрович (1997). *Алтайский язык*. Москва.
- Сатлаев, Ф.А. (n.d.). Учиться говорить по-кумандински, русско-кумандинский разговорник (in Russian). ?: Горно-Алтайская типография.

External links

- [Altai Alphabet \(http://www.tarbagan.net/fotj/AltaiLang.htm\)](http://www.tarbagan.net/fotj/AltaiLang.htm)
 - [Altai phrases \(http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9479/altai.html\)](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9479/altai.html) (Archived (<https://www.webcitation.org/5kmXWRul6?url=http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9479/altai.html>) 2009-10-25)
 - [Russian–Altai Online Dictionary \(https://web.archive.org/web/20160313235240/http://epaltay.ru/index.php?catid=48:2009-11-26-04-23-57&id=2313:2010-12-15-06-25-51&itemid=83&option=com_content&view=article\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20160313235240/http://epaltay.ru/index.php?catid=48:2009-11-26-04-23-57&id=2313:2010-12-15-06-25-51&itemid=83&option=com_content&view=article)
-

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Altai_language&oldid=969740207"

This page was last edited on 27 July 2020, at 04:37 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.